

PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964-1965

THE PAVILION OF

# AFRICA

NOVEMBER 12, 1963





Excerpts from transcription of remarks made by officials of the Fair and Representative Bolton at a press conference for the African Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, November 12, 1963.



*The African Pavilion will include a dramatic film presentation of the colorful background and scenic wonders of that continent. A Hall of Aspirations will depict the resources and economic development potential of Africa and the art and culture of its people. A wild life exhibit, a Tree House bar and restaurant, and an outdoor stage for dancing, singing and African drumming will be interspersed among the rondavels (round huts). The architects are Kahn & Jacobs, the designer is Tom John. Interior designs and exhibits are by Graham Associates, Inc., and construction by Crow Construction Company.*



MR. WILLIAM BERNIS [Vice President, Communications & Public Relations]: Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen of the press, we are delighted that you were able to join us on such short notice this morning for what we consider to be a most important press activity.

Basically, you are here to ask questions of our guests. But before we get to that, we would like to hear from the gentleman who heads the International Section for Mr. Moses, and who has done a magnificent job of gathering together the nations of the world for representation at the New York World's Fair 1964-1965. It's a pleasure to introduce the vice president of the International Division, Governor Charles Poletti.

GOVERNOR CHARLES POLETTI: Thank you, Bill. Congresswoman Bolton, President Moses, friends. This is a very stirring occasion for us in the International Division because for many months we have labored to come to this moment. It didn't seem that we would ever achieve an African Pavilion. But finally, I think it was Providence that sent us the person who we are all happy to have with us here this morning: Congresswoman Bolton.

Let it be said in explicit terms that without the interest and courage and contribution of Congresswoman Bolton we would not be having an African Pavilion.

We're going to have some individual African pavilions, as you know — those of the Sudan, Guinea, Sierra Leone, the UAR and Morocco. But for the most part the countries south and east of the Sahara were not represented. Not because of a lack of desire. Quite the contrary. I personally

visited most of these countries and talked with the heads of state and their ministers. Everyone was anxious to participate. Everyone of those nations felt that it was vital for the 70 million visitors to the Fair, Americans especially, to know more about that part of Africa. But the sad fact was that these countries did not have the financial resources to erect pavilions of their own. We then tried unsuccessfully to bring a number of these nations together and have them pool their financial resources and organize a joint pavilion.

Now we're happy that, through the sponsorship of people like Congresswoman Bolton, we shall have a pavilion that will represent most of the countries south and east of the Sahara. We, at the New York World's Fair, are pleased that the sponsors of this pavilion are so well keyed to the needs and aspirations and achievements of this part of the world. These countries have a lot to show in the way of history, culture and art, and they also want to communicate to the world a message of their needs and aspirations. I'm glad to see that the organizers of the pavilion are planning to have a "Hall of Aspirations" where plans for "the Africa of the Future" will be represented. I commend them for that. I think it is most important that we have a "Hall of Aspirations."

Now I do not believe that anyone in this country has greater knowledge of this part of the world than Congresswoman Bolton. She has been a ranking member of the House Foreign Relations Committee for 22 years, has served as a member of the U.N. General Assembly and was a member of the 4th Committee at the U.N., the Trustee Committee, which deals with many African



*Discussing the African Pavilion at the Fair are: (left to right) Governor Charles Poletti, Hon. Frances P. Bolton, Mr. Robert Moses, Mr. DeWitt T. Yates and Mr. Ray T. Graham.*



*Shown at a press conference for the African Pavilion at the Fair are Hon. Frances P. Bolton, Mr. Lionel Harris of the International Division of the Fair, and Governor Charles Poletti, with ambassadors and representatives of the African nations.*



problems.

Mrs. Bolton has also travelled extensively. In 1955 she visited about 20 of the countries we are interested in here, so she knows these countries and their people and their statesmen and their professional men. She will serve, as a good source of counselling and guidance for the African Pavilion, Messrs. Yates, Graham, and all of you. I am sure that you will lean heavily on Congresswoman Bolton for advice because she has sensitivity and knowledge in this field that is surpassed by no one in this country.

I would like now to introduce the dynamic force of the World's Fair, our president, Robert Moses. I know he's happy about the African Pavilion, and there's one particular attraction that he's very anxious to have included here. I now give you the president of the New York World's Fair, Robert Moses.

MR. ROBERT MOSES: Congresswoman Bolton, ladies and gentlemen. I might as well tell you what Charlie was talking about. He's talking about the Watusis. I'm a great enthusiast of the Watusi dancers and high jumpers. And the Watusis are a troupe that I hope to see here in the African Pavilion.

I can only echo what Charlie has said about the importance, the significance of this African Pavilion. As I've said a number of times we have given a disproportionate amount of our energy and effort to the new African republics, because we are all for them. We want to see them succeed. We want to help them. Some of them are relatively poor, new at the game, and don't have much

in the way of industry or agriculture. But they have ambitions and aspirations. They have fine objectives, and we ought to do everything we can to help them.

We're trying in every way we can to help them and as Charlie has said, it would have been a great disappointment to us and a great gap in our program, had we not had our friend from Congress, Mrs. Bolton, and a few others, to step in when it looked as though many of these new small nations could not be accommodated, simply because there wasn't enough money and support to bring it about. So they're coming in. And we're delighted with it.

Just what they will demonstrate, I don't know, but surely they will be able to show that their objectives are right, that their ambitions are correct, that they are willing to make tremendous sacrifices in the name of progress. We're going to do every last thing we can to help them.

This Fair is not just a commercial gadget. It's not just a way of attracting people to New York to spend money here. Although that is one of the objectives, that isn't the main object. The object isn't merely to exploit what we've done through the States of our Union or the United States Government. It's not merely to show what our industries have been able to accomplish. What we are really trying to do is to make this Fair a sort of Olympics of Progress and to bring here all the peoples of the world who are willing to come to exhibit their best wares, to show what they've accomplished, and to indicate what it is they're driving at. We promise them a welcome here and we promise them free competition.



*Watusi, African natives  
who grow 7 feet tall,  
performing one of their  
dances in Rwanda.*

And that, I think, is really the main object of the Fair. We call it Peace through Understanding. Those in a way are just words, but it's the spirit of the Olympic Games that we have here. It's bringing people here and saying, "Now show us everything you've got. Show us your people and show us your objectives and purposes, and what you've accomplished and what you're driving at. We'll give you the place to exhibit these wares and every support that we can in showing them to the people who come from all over the world to see them."

Again, thank you, Mrs. Bolton, for what you've done. I think the African Pavilion is going to be a grand show and one of the big things in the World's Fair.

GOVERNOR POLETTI: Before the questions start, could we have the pleasure of a word or two from your Congresswoman Bolton?

HON. FRANCES P. BOLTON [Republican Representative from Ohio]: I do very much appreciate the opportunity to say just a few words so that you might know how very tiny my part in this has been. Financially, very small. The other members of the group, who are doing a vast deal more than I, just had to be persuaded a little bit. I am, of course, very keen about Africa. I went to the United Nations in 1953, and because of the very understanding and really amazing African men and women I met there I was imbued with a great enthusiasm for things African.

And then in 1955 the Chairman of my Committee in the House, that is the House Foreign Relations Committee, said, "now take your Africa Committee and go on over



there." So it was my privilege to go to Africa, taking with me a Signal Corps photographer, because as the Chinese say — a look is worth a thousand words, a travel officer from the Department of Defense who had lived in Central and West Africa for eight years, and a doctor from the Mayo Clinic. We had the most amazing time.

I visited 24 countries and I didn't begin to see them all. Since then, many of these countries have joined the United Nations. I think Africa has a very great deal to give to this country. I think we can learn a lot from the African way of life although some people still call it primitive. Well, probably it is. But we also have much that is primitive in our own country. Just go on down south, go out west — or around the corner from where I used to live in Cleveland. It's primitive to a degree.

I felt that there was a very great need for having Africa here in your Fair, in our Fair, because the Fair belongs to the whole country. I believe that it was so essential for Africa to be represented, and to be pictured here in ways that people can see and hear and feel, that when I discovered that those who had sort of agreed to go ahead with the organization of the pavilion had fallen out, and the Graham brothers and Mr. Yates came to me, I really got terribly excited over it, particularly since they had that exquisite model with them.

I do hope that African women will have some kind of representation in the pavilion. We now have an organization of African women here, the African-American Women's Organization, and its office is right here in New York. I want to say that the African women are simply

out of this world; they are simply marvelous. They head up organizations of their own and they perform administrative feats that you wouldn't believe possible.

I also wish there might be some way of showing the tremendous work that Africans are doing in the field of health. They are training doctors and nurses, and they are doing everything possible in the health areas. We should open our hearts to them and help them, and not necessarily with money. We should make them understand that we want to see them prosper and that we also share with them those things that are not material, things of the spirit.

So it's a thrill for me, Mr. Moses and Governor Poletti, to be here today, to see this African Pavilion get started, and to feel the enthusiasm of this gathering. I thank all you press people for your wonderful spirit, for your enthusiasm, and for your desire to help make this project a terrific success which, of course, it will be. And then there is Mr. Harris, who never gave up on the project or lost his point of view. He's a real optimist and there were moments when we needed his optimism.

I thank you very deeply for understanding how tremendous the influence of Africa is going to be on the future of this country and of every country of the world. I am also deeply grateful to you, perhaps in the name of African peoples, because as you know, they call me "Mother" and I love them all. We are great friends and are doing a lot of things together. So it's with a great deal of enthusiastic hope and appreciation and gratitude, that I took these too many minutes to speak here.

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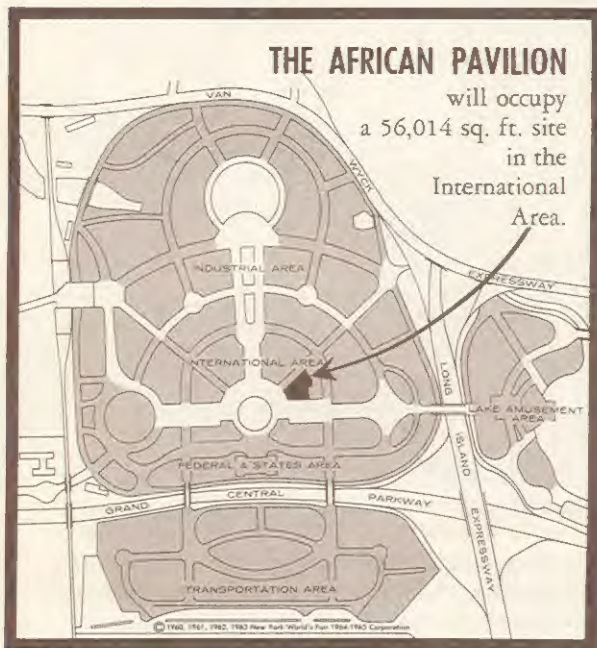
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